

The Third Sex ?

By

Harold G. King

Nine Lecture on Life of Preacher

THOSE who were fortunate enough to hear the Rev. Harold G. King in his "Lights and Shades of a Parson's Life" last night in St. Luke's parish hall, enjoyed every minute of the lecture, or rather reminiscences, of the reverend gentleman. He has a great fund of anecdotes that are bright, breezy, wholesome and heartsome. The very simplicity of his numerous stories will remain long in the memory and will be repeated around the hearth in many a family circle. His stories just naturally float out. They have a sympathetic quality that never fails to awaken a response. He seems equally at home with either comedy or tragedy and produces irresistible humour, or draws tears of pity, apparently without an effort.

—Fort William, Ont., "Times-Journal."

The Third Sex ?

BY

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To my "brothers-in-arms," men who having consecrated their lives to the glory of God and the strengthening of their fellows, have followed that purpose bravely and faithfully through sunshine and shadow—the Parsons of Canada—these pages are affectionately dedicated.

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I.

A GENERAL CONFESSION.

A famous showman once said, "You can fool some of the people all the time, and you can fool all of the people some of the time, but you can't fool all of the people all of the time." The pages that follow give the circumstances of an attempt the writer made to disprove that old circus man's conclusion. Some years ago I made a hilarious journey over nineteen hundred miles of railroad track spinning yarns (under the title, "The Lights and Shades of a Parson's Life") to every audience that I could inveigle into any public hall to hear me—and got home alive. They had come to be "edified"! Hence my doubt of the truth of the opening quotation.

I brought home with me, however, some interesting conclusions. Wherever my alleged lecture was given, the local press, in expressing regret at the paucity of numbers present, said, "If ever this lecturer comes to our town again, he can be assured of a full house." Consequently, I would suggest to all budding lecturers that they should devise some method to give their second lecture first! Another piece of advice that may be of value to such entertainers is that they should always keep absolute control of the local programme. In many places where

I went, the local committee, fearing to offend any of their home "talent," had put them all in, with the result that the evening was about three-quarters over before the supposed Big Gun was allowed to fire. In one place indeed the chairman announced that Miss So-and-So would sing "Till the Sands of the Desert Grow Cold." I thought she was actually going to do so!

Such lecture tours often provide excellent exercise in the development of the grace of humility. After one such evening a brother clergyman, who had heard the lecture, approached me and said, "You ought to get that address of yours published in pamphlet form; you could easily sell it for ten cents a copy" (and the audience had paid twenty-five cents a head to get in!) While I was digesting that choice morsel, another man in the audience seriously volunteered this advice, "Why don't you send that lecture material of yours to some big periodical? They will pay from twenty-five to fifty dollars for all sorts of trash!" And years after the tour I was reminded of a certain story I had once told by one who said, "You remember you told us that in that Penny Reading you gave us a few years ago."

Having made the foregoing confession, and by so doing, I hope, acquitted myself of Chesterton's accusation that a bore is "one who insists on talking about himself when you want to talk about your-

self," I will go ahead with my tangled skein of yarns; for, though, for the most part, they are personal experiences and must be told in the first person, yet in every case the writer was the least important actor in the scene.

The lights and shades of any life always intermingle, and the joys and sorrows of a Canadian parson's life are thrown together like a crazy-quilt. Please note that title,—*"Lights and Shades."* The first time I gave my lecture, my chairman was one of my own Churchwardens, and he introduced me by saying very gravely, "Ladies and gentlemen, we are going to be favored tonight by a lecture from our Rector on the subject, 'The shady side of a clergyman's life.'" When the laughter had subsided I arose confusedly and commenced to assure my audience that the last thing a parson would ever talk about was the "shady side" in his life.

To illustrate my point I proceeded to tell a story. A certain young man asserted that in every person's life there was some spot that he always wanted to keep dark. He was contradicted by a companion, and a wager was made on the subject. The difficulty, however, was to prove or disprove the allegation. Finally it was suggested that a test should be made at a dinner party that they both were to attend a few evenings later, when the guest of the evening was to be a certain Bishop noted for his personal sanctity. By pre-arrangement between

the conspirators, during the dinner a fake telegram was handed to His Lordship, which contained the message, "All is discovered,—fly at once." The Bishop hastily excused himself, and has never been heard of since!

Such was my story, but unfortunately, just as I was about to tell it, I recognized in my audience a Bishop, and seeking to save myself from the charge of intentional disrespect, I opened by saying, "I am going to tell you a story about a Bishop, but I want to assure His Lordship of —, that what I have to say could have no possible reference to him." A few minutes later when I blundered into the statement that the Bishop of my tale was one noted for his personal sanctity, there was a shout of laughter, led, I am glad to say, by the visiting prelate.

The experiences that follow have been culled from a period of over twenty years as a Canadian teacher, lay-catechist and clergyman. It seems today like harking back to prehistoric times when I remember the callow youth who entered a little Ontario village, carrying with him little more than a somewhat rusty suit of clothes, a surplice and a dangerous susceptibility to grin. I had been sent there after the death of the former incumbent to fill the gap until a new man could be appointed, and were it not for the long-suffering charity of the inhabitants, the cause of the Church of England in that place

would have gone down to total eclipse during my three months' "encumbrancy."

One experience stands out very clearly. On Ascension Day of that year I was to take my first service in a little country church about ten miles from my place of abode. It was a lovely spring morning and the road was fairly good for bicycling when I started. But after some miles, the road entered the bush where the sun had not conquered the effects of the recent rains. Eventually I came to a dark, muddy water-hole that had taken possession of the whole right-of-way, leaving only a slippery six-inch path along one side. Trying to skirt this on my bicycle, the wheels suddenly skidded towards the bush, and the unfortunate catechist did an Annette Kellerman dive into the welcoming pool. Getting out and dragging my wheel around the next bend in the road, I was dismayed to see that I had arrived at the church, where my little congregation of fifteen or twenty people, whom I had never seen, were awaiting their special preacher. There was no one to introduce us and I had considerable difficulty in proving my identity, but when that was done, a motherly old woman took me into the vestry and scraped me down, and the service proceeded. Truly a cassock and surplice can sometimes, like charity, cover a multitude of imperfections.

Three months later those in authority were evidently under the impression that the welfare of the

Church demanded my removal to another sphere of labour, and I received orders to go to the Lake District of Muskoka, where I had charge of a mission district with three stations. There were no railroads of any kind, and the highways were little better than bush trails. Most of my travelling had to be done on foot. From thirty-five to forty miles between Saturday noon and the same hour on Monday was no uncommon walk. In the summer time a lot of work could be done by canoe, and I had many a battle with wind and wave in a ten-foot bark canoe.

Canoeing is much like bicycling. After a while one gets so accustomed to unconsciously balancing the light craft, that it is almost difficult to fall out. But only experience teaches that comforting fact. One day I had carried my canoe upturned on my shoulders over a mile and a half of portage, and was just taking to the water in the next lake, when a stranger hailed me and asked me to give him a lift over to the opposite shore, about four miles away. The lake was rough and my canoe was built for one passenger only. The stranger admitted his ignorance of the game, so I put him in front of me, seated on the bottom of the canoe amidships. His anxious look betokened that he was hoping his hair was parted in the middle. Every lurch of the frail craft was punctured by a gasp from my human ballast. After we had gone about half way he started to tell me

about a friend of his who knew nothing about canoeing and had foolishly gone out the previous autumn without permission in a canoe he had found near a hunting camp, paying for his temerity with his life. I said, "What was his name, and where did it happen?" He answered, "Johnson; and it occurred down on Black River." I said, "I owned that canoe, and you are in it now." He nearly went overboard!

Little driving could be done on such roads as we had, but horseback riding would have been a pleasure if one could have secured a good saddle-horse. I frequently rode an old farm plug that would persist in putting her feet down as if she were driving piles. The fact that I have never reached six feet in height is largely owing to the telescoping my backbone got when riding that old Rosinante. In the winter, however, except in time of blizzard, traveling was a luxury,—across the ice and through the bush with stinging frost and jingling bells. It was like a journey through fairyland.

Snowshoeing was very pleasurable, except in the spring of the year. The sport was spoiled for ever by a tramp across ten miles of ice one March. A steady thaw had set in and the ice was covered with about six inches of slushy snow. The only way to get home from my most distant Sunday appointment was by snowshoes across the ice. After about a hundred yards of it, the snowshoes clogged and were

too heavy to drag. I had to knock the slush loose with my stick. Soon I became so wearied that I was compelled to lie down in the slush and rest for a few minutes. This wearisome mode of progression went on for over five hours. Eventually, when I reached the shore I had been aiming for, I was forced to lie down for half an hour before I could move on to my boarding place. I was wearing several pairs of heavy socks and buckskin mocassins. These were sopping wet and the friction of the lamp-wick snowshoe thongs had brought the blood from my feet through to the outside of the mocassins. I have not snowshoed since!

Amid such scenes and activities the anecdotes that follow find their setting.

II.

SOME GRINS.

The lighter side of a parson's life includes the many smiles and gratifications that come his way. By the smiles I mean the grins—the funny things the laity (and sometimes the clerics) do and say in the presence of a skypilot, but before whom he must preserve a straight face,—and then afterwards get behind a fence corner and laugh till his sides ache. "Billy" Sunday was truly inspired when he said, "God likes a little humour, as is evidenced by the fact that He made the monkey, the parrot, and—some of you people."

The comedy of life starts with infancy. Truly it is "the little things in life that count." A joyous story comes to mind of a well known lay-worker who was a practical joker. He married a wife who was also a practical joker. When the first birth occurred the young father was off on duty in the wilderness of Northern British Columbia. A telegram reached him, giving the brief announcement of a birth in the family, but stating neither the sex nor the number. Letters with fuller particulars followed, but moving about as he did, the telegram contained the only information he had received by the time he returned to his Ontario home some weeks

later. Knowing from his letters his ignorance and curiosity, the wife set a trap for her bewildered spouse. She gathered all the babies of the same age in the neighborhood and put them with her own offspring in one big double bed. Greeting her husband at the door with a wifely kiss, she said, "Tom, I have something upstairs to show you." Imagine his expected surprise when she threw back the coverlet and showed an array of about a dozen babies. The joke fell flat, however, for Tom did not turn a hair, but only said, "Great Scott, Mary, did any get away?"

He was not nearly so flustered as the other young father who, intending to wire the simple announcement of a similar event to his brother in a distant city, to be followed by further particulars by letter, sent the inspired telegram, "Twins born today; more next week."

The Sacrament of Holy Baptism provides many a grin. I remember, when in charge of a backwoods Ontario mission, an elderly clergyman came from town on a "baptizing bee." One of the babies to be christened was a boy who was to bear the name of Eric, but the parents and Godparents pronounced it with a long E. The old parson, who was somewhat deaf, said, "Name this child." "E-ric," responded the Godfather. Immediately the clergyman said, "Harriet, I bap—," when I hastily stopped him, saying, "It is a boy, sir." Again he said,

"Name this child." "E-ric." "What's that?" asked the puzzled preacher. The six-year-old sister of the baby proceeded to explain by calling out shrilly, "Earache." I had to give the correct pronunciation, and I verily believe that family think to this day that their child was wrongly named.

One Easter afternoon in later years I was in my parish Church in a New Ontario town, when a man and a woman entered, the latter carrying a tiny infant of a few hours old. They were Galicians and spoke very little English. They explained as well as they could that they wanted to have the baby baptized. By dint of very careful and simple explanations I got through the service up to the naming of the child. Instead of pronouncing the name, the man handed me a slip of paper on which was written the word, "Wtadystaw." I wondered whether that were the place in Austria from which the parents had come, some disease from which the child was suffering, or the proposed name. I took a shot at it and used it as a name, pronouncing it "Toddystaw." The elders seemed to be satisfied, but I have wondered since whether they called it "Toddy" for short, and what the youngster afterwards would think of me for giving him such a name. My fate might be that of the unfaithful husband referred to in a recent advertisement, which read, "If John Smith, who deserted his wife and babe twenty years ago, will call at a certain address, said

babe will knock the stuffing out of him."

The parsons themselves provide the grins some times. Some years ago I had an assistant who was a grave, sedate young man and a great stickler for all Church rules and regulations. In that diocese a card used to hang in every Church vestibule giving certain directions to the congregations, including one which read, "Remember it is a rule of the Church that all baptisms, marriages and funerals must take place in the Church." One day a parishioner asked my assistant to officiate at a baptism. "Certainly," said the earnest clergyman, "if you bring your baby to the Church next Sunday afternoon, I will gladly baptize it." "Oh, no," replied the father, "I want you to come to my house for the service." He got the astounding answer, "I cannot do that, you know because it is a rule of the Church that all births, deaths and marriages must take place in the Church!"

Sunday School children are notoriously makers of "howlers." A teacher had told her class the story of Jacob's ladder, and then tried to have it repeated by question and answer. She asked the obviously foolish question, "Why was it necessary for those angels to use a ladder in coming from and going to Heaven, when they had wings?," and she received the well-deserved answer from one young hopeful, "Because, Miss, I guess they was moultin'!"

An old minister of my acquaintance was catechizing my Sunday School about Christmas time, and had told the children most gravely the story of the Massacre of the Innocents; then, reviewing the lesson, he said, "Now, children, why did that very wicked king kill all those dear little babies?" A ten-year-old boy, who evidently had younger brothers and sisters, and consequently had considerable sympathy for King Herod, eagerly answered. "Because he did not like kids."

My name once caused a disturbance in a service. This also occurred near Christmas, and the mother of the child in question had apparently taught her kiddie the same story, because when I appeared in full view in the Church, the youngster called out from the back of the building, "Mother, is that the King who killed all the babies?"

It has been my lot for years to give the scriptural teaching at a girls' school. Two examination howlers will always be remembered. One young lady wrote, "Seth was Lot's wife." Another, in answer to a request for a detailed outline of the life of Moses, answered with telegraphic brevity, "Boyhood, Manhood, Death."

Every parson can tell amusing stories concerning marriage. Those that follow are actual occurrences from my own experience. Many times have I proven the mathematical paradox that "one and

one make one," but the first occasion will never be forgotten. It was in a little country village. A young farmer had arranged with me to officiate at his wedding. Naturally I anticipated the event with great interest and made careful preparations that all should go off in first-class style. On the morning of the wedding the groom and his best man called at the parsonage to make final arrangements. This was in pre-prohibition days, and they had already started to celebrate. I warned them both that they would have to sober up before the appointed hour, or I would refuse to officiate. In the afternoon the husband-elect was clear-headed when the bridal party entered the Church, but the best man had not quite regained his accustomed sobriety. The moment I pronounced the young couple man and wife, and before the ceremony was ended, the best man, who was standing behind, threw his arms around the neck of the bride and kissed her, saying, "I said I would get there first." After the register was signed the bridal party left the vestry, and my wife struck up the Wedding March on the little organ. Instead, however, of their proceeding from the Church to the joyous strains, bride, bridegroom and witnesses gathered round the organ, applauded the somewhat flustered amateur organist and demanded an encore.

It is a remarkable fact that very seldom is a bride nervous, and almost invariably the groom is scared nearly stiff. Why, I could never understand.

He seems to think that all eyes in the Church are focussed on the back of his neck, when he ought to know that everybody is looking at the bride. The man is only a necessary adjunct without which there could be no wedding, but a wooden Indian from the front of a cigar store might fill the role as satisfactorily as far as the congregation is concerned or interested.

Once a young Irish couple were entering double harness, and I noticed that the young man was terribly flustered, while the bride was as cool as a cucumber. In the vestry afterwards, I said to him, "You were pretty badly scared. You could not have been more rattled if you were going to be hanged rather than married." He said, "Well, Parson, it would not have been such a long job."

In the middle of an Ontario winter a man came to my back door one morning and asked to see the clergyman. By his shamefaced, nervous aspect, I knew what was the matter with him, and invited him into my study to get the required information for the marriage register. He told me that he and his bride had come into town by the morning train, and wanted to be married that afternoon. When I asked him for his license, he hunted through all his pockets, producing laundry bills, a concert programme, and other papers, but no marriage license. "Did you ever have one?" I asked. "Yes, sir, I bought it in (naming another town twelve miles

North) yesterday." "Were you and your bride looking at it on the train this morning?" "Yes, rather sheepishly. "Now," I said, "Go back to the hotel and see if your bride has it in her possession for safe keeping." This proved to be the case.

There was no fire in the Church, and consequently the wedding had to be held in my house. Knowing they would come to the front gate in the afternoon, I paid a small boy to make a path through the deep snow to the front gate. Boylike, he dug a trench only the width of the shovel. About two o'clock a sleigh appeared, containing the engaged pair and the father and the brother of the bride. I watched from the front window and saw an amusing formal bridal procession. Of course, they wanted to come in arm-in-arm and (of course, again) the fond and foolish young man would not allow his lady-love to plough through the deep snow, so he self-sacrificingly took the drift on one side of the path; while she with equal solicitude plunged through the opposite drift, the two of them frantically clinging to each other's arm across the intervening ditch. When I thought all was ready in the drawing-room, the bride said, "Wait a minute." She was in a pretty brown travelling dress, but judge my embarrassment when she calmly walked to a corner of the room and divested herself of skirt and coat. It was not so bad, though, as it sounds, because she had an orthodox white wedding dress

underneath. The marriage proceeded without any further unaccustomed ritual, except that when I said to the groom, "Wilt thou have this woman to be thy wedded wife?", he looked at me in unconcealed surprise and said, "Sure, that's what I came here for!"

All bridegrooms, however, are not nervous. One big locomotive engineer went through the service calmly and stolidly until I asked him for the ring. After considerable hunting through all his pockets, he produced a box, but unfortunately held it upside down and pulled the bottom off in mistake for the top. The ring fell and rolled down the aisle. The young man darted madly after it. The only ones who did not giggle were the parson and the bridegroom. When he attempted to put it upon his lady's finger, the ring was found to be too tight. I waited while he tried to get it over the knuckle with a screw-like motion. After some moments, during which he evidently forgot where he was and what he was doing, and apparently thinking he was repairing his engine, he blurted out. "Gee, I wish I had some soap!" My sexton chuckled, and then choked all through the rest of the service.

Weddings of foreigners are atrociously funny. Two Southern Europeans came to see me to arrange for the wedding of one of them. He could speak no English and his friend very little. They knew nothing of Canadian marriage customs and I had to explain how they were to get a license. Then, to

verify his information, the friend said, "You say, w go to Court House and get paper. Then bring paper to you. We pay Court House man two dollars. What you cost?"

On the day of the wedding a large party of men and women wearing gay ribbon rosettes came to the Church, preceded by a brass band. It was the funniest thing in the world trying to explain and interpret the archaic Prayer Book English to that group of simple Balkanese. After the man had gravely promised to give the girl everything on earth, I pronounced them man and wife, and, the service over, we went to the vestry for the registrations. I found that neither bride nor groom could write. The interpreter could, however, and I asked him if there was any other person in the Church who could sign his name and so act as witness. He went out and brought back a man who said he was able to make his signature. I showed him the place and told him to write his name. He felt around in his pockets and then said, "Sorry, but I forgot my rubber stamp." By this time the whole party, about twenty-five in number, men and women, had come into the vestry. When they were about to go, I offered to shake hands with the groom. Instantly he fell on his knees and kissed my hand. The bride followed suit, and the whole party marched around the table and gave me the same respectful salute before leaving.

Here again, the grins are not always provided

by the laity. The curate of a neighboring parish had been asked to officiate at the wedding of a young couple. The marriage was to take place in the early morning and to be followed by a private celebration of the Holy Communion, but in order that the bridal couple might catch an early train, it was necessary to shorten the service as far as possible. The young clergyman approached his rector for instructions. The latter could find nothing in his own library that would establish a precedent for such cases, and came over to my home to consult my books. Failing there to get any further light on the problem, he said, "Oh, never mind, I will tell Smith to take the whole of the marriage service and then to start the Communion Office at the exhortation, 'Ye that do truly and earnestly repent' "!

The Prayer Book services of the Church of England give many opportunities for most unhallowed grins, particularly if one gets hold of an old Prayer Book. When a student I used an old Service Book on one occasion and prayed most devoutly for "Our Gracious Sovereign Lord, King William," although that royal gentleman had been in his grave for several generations. The death of Queen Victoria and the accession of King Edward VII was a pit-fall for many. Using a Victorian Prayer Book, I said "Our Gracious Sovereign Lady, Queen Vic—Edward." An old Irish woman in the congregation remarked afterwards, "Of

course, sir, you had to correct yourself, but you might have added, when you mentioned our dear old Queen, 'God rest her sowl!'" At that time the present reigning sovereign bore the title of Duke of Cornwall and York. Like many others, I referred to him at times in the State Prayers as the "Duke of Yornwall and Cork."

On the Muskoka Lakes, there was a tall Presbyterian minister by the name of McGillicuddy, whose work covered the same field as mine. In one place we used a school-house on alternate Sundays, and I knew that he always closed his service with the singing of the long-metred Doxology. One stormy Sunday evening only a few men were present at my service, and we had nobody who could be relied upon to lead the singing. I chose the simplest hymns available, and announced at the close that we should sing, "Glory to Thee, my God, this night," asking someone to start the tune. There was absolute silence and in order to encourage them I said, "You know the tune; it is always used to close the Presbyterian service in this place. It is the long-metred McGillicuddy!"

Not being musical, many a time have I got into trouble over hymns. Frequently, for instance, I have tried to sing "Nearer my God to Thee" to the tune of the British National Anthem, but after the first line the words will not fit, and you can imagine

the result. One unhappy experience with regard to hymns is worth relating. In a certain country Church the school-teacher used to play the organ, but one Sunday, knowing she was going to be absent, I said to the old Churchwarden, as we went long to Church together, "I must ask you to lead the hymns this morning." To his dismay, however, he found he had left his spectacles at home, but thought that if we chose well-known hymns he could manage. During the service all went well until I announced the hymn, "O God, our help in ages past." My elderly friend struck it up from memory, as he could not see the words, and sang the first two lines in a cracked, quavering tenor, but his version was, "O God, our help in ages past; I was a wandering sheep." He certainly was!

About ten miles from my boarding place in those bye-gone days there was a little settlement apparently dropped down from heaven into the middle of the Muskoka bush. Some years before, a group of hardy pioneers had hewn out for themselves rough homesteads and then tried to clear away the stones. Great cairns of boulders adorned every field, and every farmer's boy in that neighborhood spent his holidays as first mate on a "stone boat." A beneficent Government had given free-grant farms to grateful and optimistic settlers, to be paid for later in long years of back-breaking stone-gathering. The dis-

trict was well named "Stony Lonesome." The public building in the community was the school house. It served all purposes, educational, political, social and religious. It was a building about two feet square, constructed of heavy logs chinked with mortar. The floor was of wide unplanned boards which, having dried out, allowed the draft to tickle the school children's ankles and to aggravate the elders' rheumy joints. I took the first Church of England service ever held in the place, and among the younger element of the colony when I first put on my surplice before their eyes, there being no vestry. As the garment came over my head I heard a gasp, and then a little girl's voice whispered audibly, "Oh, look, Jimmy, he is putting on his nightgown."

[Speaking of surplices calls to mind a nightmare from which I suffered many times. In this dream I was invariably about to preach somewhere but I had a fearful struggle getting into my surplice. The climax came when I dreamt that I was in the vestry of a certain Church. Other clergy were present and the service had started. I had arrived late and was to preach the sermon, but was quite unable to get my surplice over my head. Every now and then a brother parson would come in from the vestry and tell me to hurry. The dream was ended by someone awaking me, thinking I had "thrown my surplice." The upper sheet of the bed was twisted up

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The Sunday service at Stony Lonesome ranked in importance with a political meeting, an auction sale, or a dance, in that every living thing that was sufficiently tamed and was not tied up attended. All the dogs for miles around came. On a certain sultry Sunday afternoon these noble friends of man, forbidden to enter the building because there was not room, crawled underneath to get out of the sun. The little Cockney woman who led the singing had just started the hymn, "'Oly, 'Oly, 'Oly," when one of the dogs below, disliking her accent, howled. His companions, evidently protesting against such an unseemly disturbance, remonstrated with him. In a moment a general fight commenced right under our feet. The racket was so terrific that it was impossible to proceed with the service, so the whole congregation, including the minister, went outside to part the rioters. Fearing, however, to crawl in amongst the noisy mob, we tried to drive them out with sticks and stones. But it was no use, so the service was ended and the dogs left to finish their argument and one another in peace (or in pieces). A well known Baffin Land missionary tells how, for want of lumber, he built a Church of walrus hide in the far North. It served its purpose well until one fine morning he found his Church had disappeared. His dogs had eaten it! Mine was but another in-

stance of a Church that "went to the dogs."

The bugbear of many a congregation, and incidentally of many a preacher, too, is the sermon. If the preacher be a student of books and men, his pulpit efforts should improve as the years go on, and in many cases his "Farewell" sermon may be ranked among his finest orations. I had the rather unique experience of *starting* my ministry with a "Farewell" sermon, and I have no hesitation in saying that it was by long odds one of the very best sermons I ever preached. I was teaching school on the North Shore of Lake Superior, and our clergyman lived about sixty-five miles down the C.P.R. track. He was asking me to read his farewell sermon to the congregation, as he was leaving the parish owing to ill health, and could not hold another service in the locality. That was the first service I ever took and the first sermon I ever preached. It was a beautiful message and enabled me to commence my own ministerial work by the curious anomaly of preaching a "Farewell" sermon.

Later on, when in charge of my Muskoka Lake mission, I could not get a visiting preacher for the Harvest Festival. Theoretically, Church of England students are not allowed to preach sermons of their own composition. Looking back through the years I now see the wisdom of that rule. On that occasion in my dilemma I went to my old "Pri-

in-charge" in a near-by town and asked his advice. He gave me a special dispensation and told me to prepare a sermon of my own. By cribbing thoughts from various printed sermons, I produced a remarkable effort. As I remember it, the sermon described the annual material sowing and reaping, and then went on to give a fanciful picture of the Last Great Day, when the results of our lifetime's sowing would appear before us. For a peroration I had memorized a passage from a well-known American preacher. This Harvest Festival was to be held at two of my stations on the same day. I had let off my oratorical fireworks at one place in the morning and was inordinately proud of my maiden effort. A young man in the congregation volunteered to go to Stony Lonesome with me in the afternoon. There the school-house had been most wonderfully and fearfully decorated with farm produce of every variety. My companion, somewhat fatigued after his journey by canoe and afoot, settled himself on a bench against the wall to sleep during the sermon; (he had heard it in the morning anyway). All went well until I reached my cherished peroration,—*"They come—the fair fruits of our labours,"* when indeed they *did* come,—in the form of a big bunch of onions off the wall straight on the top of the head of the dozing youth. He woke with a yell, and the illustration was

so realistic that I am sure that sermon will never be forgotten in that locality.

It is the custom in the Church of England for the clergyman to conclude his sermon with an ascription of praise and honour to the Almighty, but it is exceedingly hard to remember forms of words when the preacher has the toothache. It was a sleepless Sunday morning in mid-summer. Choir and congregation (at least those who were awake), were doubtless wondering when the preacher was going to stop and the Churchwardens were anxiously calculating how many nickels they were going to get on the collection plates, when Satan evidently determined "start something." Suddenly, just as the sermon closed, a grumbling tooth gave an extra severe jolt. It felt as if a hatpin had suddenly pierced from the jaw to the top of my head. The familiar words of the ascription vanished from memory entirely, and in agony I called out, "Now I lay me down to sleep." The usually somnolent words effectually waked everybody.

Scriptural texts can often become badly twisted. A visiting clergyman at one of my parishes read very gravely to the wondering congregation this question: "Which of you by taking thought can add one cubit unto his cubit?" None could answer.

My old Priest-in-charge, mentioned before, pronounced as his text one morning, "It is easier for

rich man to go through the eye of a needle than for a camel to enter the Kingdom of Heaven." The statement was not original, and, apparently noticing something wrong, he hesitated, then repeated it in the same way and then went on to prove his contention, doing so seemingly to his own satisfaction, though perhaps to that of no one else.

That same dear old man was very fond of long words. One hot summer morning he preached a learned sermon on works of supererogation, that last word being one of the shortest in his address. A chorister went to sleep and snored audibly. Next morning I purposely went into his place of business and said to him, "Mr. —, I was very sorry to see you go to sleep during the Rector's sermon yesterday." "Oh, but, sir, I had to do so in self-defence." "What on earth do you mean?" "Well, you see, sir, I was late getting up yesterday morning and I went to Church without any breakfast, and the Rector kept talking about soup, soup, soup, so much that I got fearfully hungry. I had either to go to sleep or get out."

It requires careful thought and long preparation to make ready for a Preaching Mission in any parish, and much depends upon the personality of the one who conducts the Mission. In one respect at least I think I have to my credit one of the most suc-

cessful missions ever conducted in Canada. I had been invited to a neighboring parish for this particular work and prepared long and arduously for my task. The Mission lasted a week. I preached twice each Sunday and every night during the intervening week to crowded congregations, as well as conducting special afternoon services for women and children, having many private interviews and the other duties of such an event. When the service was over I went back to my own parish, tired but satisfied. I received my reward a few weeks later when the rector of the Mission parish wrote to me and said, "I feel I cannot thank you enough for the splendid Mission you conducted in this place. As a direct result we have had the most successful 'Social' in the history of the parish!"

A shaggy water-dog comes up from the depths looking wet, bedraggled and despondent. With a bound and a shake he sends the cold water flying in all directions and is once more a comfortable, joyous, kinky-haired canine. So a splash of humour enables a poor parson to shake off his cold douche and to "come up smiling."

III.

SOME FUNNY "CANADIANS."

Canada is peopled with a very composite nation and amusing types are to be found in every community. I have never been a foreign missionary, but it has fallen to my lot to try to teach the truths of religion to representatives of many different races. The most difficult task of this kind perhaps was the preparation of a Chinese laundryman for baptism. He knew very little English and I less Chinese, but by the aid of a Chinese-English dictionary I managed to explain the Church of England Catechism to him. His dictionary, however, did not provide definitions that corresponded in date with the Prayer Book, and we struck a snag in the explanation of the Apostles' Creed. He was sitting beside me and explaining to me his understanding of the old sacred words, but when he came to the passage, "From thence He shall come to judge the quick and the dead," he hesitated. "Well, Mark, what does it mean?" He anxiously turned to his dictionary and then said with a puzzled look, "Christ is coming again some day from Heaven to judge—to judge *those that run very fast* and those that are dead." For a moment I was in a dilemma, and then I tried to explain it thus, "Mark, if I were

to stick a pin under your finger nail, would you do it?" He admitted that he certainly would. "I suppose," I said, "that I stuck a pin under the finger nail of a dead body, would there be any feeling?" "No." "Well, you see, that thing that hurts under the nail we call the quick, because it is a living thing." His intelligence was also quick and lively and he was able to understand that the Second Advent would usher in the Judgment of those who were alive on earth at the time, as well as of those who had departed this life.

In these days we can find very little that is amusing about a German, and less that is commendable, but in the years of my early ministry the German race was not "taboo" in the English-speaking world. In one of my first missions there were quite a number of German settlers. One old father of that nationality was the father of a tailor in a near-by village. The old man's legs were of unequal length. He brought some homespun cloth to his son to have made into a pair of trousers. He carefully measured and the garment was made and delivered to him. Some days later the father came into town and entered his son's shop in a friendly way saying, "Heinie, mine son, I haf brought you a pair of trousers ever since you vas a boy, and you don't know of your father's short leg yet. You haf put the short leg on the wrong side and spoil all um clots." The

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respectful son advised his poor old father to wear them backwards.

In the winter the snow fell to a great depth in Muskoka, burying roads and fences, and necessitating sleigh trails through the sheltered bush. One Sunday afternoon I started to drive ten miles to an out-station, but after a short distance there was no road visible through the drifts. A neighbouring farmer, a German, came down from his house and I asked him, "Where is the road to Perch Creek?" He gravely pointed downwards and said, "Down dere ten foot." I went home.

One could write a book of reminiscences about French-Canadians, but one story will suffice. Away up in New Ontario, Lake Temiscamingue forms the boundary between the Provinces of Ontario and Quebec. With a little English clergyman I went across the lake to visit a French-Canadian village. There was one long straggling street, and every other shop seemed to be a liquor store. Wishing to buy some souvenir of the place, I decided to purchase a silver spoon with some locally typical scene engraved upon it, one of the simplest and commonest souvenirs to be picked up in most places. We came to a shop that looked like a jeweller's (anyway it had an alarm clock in the window), and we went in. To the smiling damsel behind the counter I

said, "Have you any souvenir spoons?" she shrugged her shoulders and answered, "Je ne comprends pas." We left, and outside I said to my companion, "Say, Brown, what is the French word for spoon?" He answered in modern Shakespearian English, "Search me." Then the word came to me, and I went into another similar establishment, and, summoning up my best French, said laboriously to the man behind the counter, "Donnez-moi un souvenir cuiller." He answered in English that was more ready than my French, "Sorry, sir, we have not any in stock." We departed once more, and I said to my chum, "You know I am determined to get some sort of souvenir in this place, and the only thing they seem to have is liquor. Let us get a bottle of the famous whisky blanc." So we entered one of the numerous drink shops and, not trusting my French this time, I asked for a bottle of whisky blanc. It was produced and I paid one dollar for it; then, satisfied with my souvenir of French Canada, I asked the clerk where it had been made. He said, "Valkerville, Ontay-rio." That souvenir of Quebec was afterwards used in a spirit lamp, and I am reasonably certain nobody but a Canadian habitant could drink it.

Everyone who knows Canada is aware of the splendid contribution old Scotland has made to the race, and the dry, caustic humour of her sons.

added much to the gaiety of our nation. Sometimes, however, Scottish humour is both unintentional and gruesome. On the Muskoka Lakes a Scottish Presbyterian woman did my laundry work for me; she was a kind-hearted soul, but she frequently made my flesh creep by telling me, "I have your shroud all ready for you, sir." She never could remember the word surplice.

Even the laughter-loving Irish gladly acknowledge their debt to Scotland for their own supply of good cheer. A well-known Irish priest in Ontario was chatting one day with a Scotchman; the latter, charmed with the priest's native wit, said to him, "Father Malone, you may be Irish; in fact, your name implies that you are; but I am very sure there must be a little Scotch in you." "Ah, my friend," said the jolly Friar, "I am never so happy as when there is a little Scotch in me."

Long years ago it fell to my lot to be appointed as teacher in a Highland Scotch settlement in Ontario. One of the oddities of the neighborhood was an eccentric old bachelor by the name of Dougal MacTavish. Too frequently Dougal had too much "Scotch" in him, and it was a common sight in the market-town to see him leaning tipsily against some hotel corner and bravely daring all and sundry to come on and have a "fecht." His challenge went

something like this, "Ma name is Dougal MacTavish and I am fra the Sixth Conside-line of Toro an I can lick any man my own big, my own heavy an my own ugly in the county whateffer. Me and m brother and sixteen ithers licked a man in South Simca the ithor day, and he was no bad fechter either."

Very early in my stay in that community learned the danger of gossiping in an intermarried community. Everybody in that settlement was related to everybody else, but I did not know it until I had spent an evening at the home of one of my trustees, where I had foolishly spun a few yarns about that same eccentric individual. As we drove home I asked the young Englishman who was with me why he had laughed so uproariously at my stories of the odd old bachelor, while the others present had preserved a strict silence. I said, "You knew those stories about Dougal as well as I did why then, did they seem so funny to you?" He answered, "Oh, the yarns weren't so funny, but yours were. You didn't know that Dougal MacTavish was your hostess' brother!"

Some time later I was driving to school one morning with another of my trustees. It was in the spring of the year and the roads were breaking up after the heavy winter. The night had been mild

fortunately, because we saw in a ditch a cutter containing a fur-coated man who was lazily rubbing his eyes. It was Dougal. Quite evidently he had driven out the night before very much the worse for wear, and wandered off into the ditch. Some one else had come along and, having considerable sympathy for the more useful member of the pair, had unharnessed the horse and taken it home, leaving the old Scotchman to sleep off the effects of his spree. My companion shouted to him, "Hello. Dougal, what's the matter?" He got the sleepy, bewildered answer, "I dunno, I have either lost a horse or found a cutter."

The "Isle of Saints" has contributed, I suppose, to almost every Canadian congregation and many are the joys that the Irish add to parochial life. I will confine my reminiscences to those concerning two delightful Hibernian women. The first was a big-hearted, sharp-tongued daughter of Erin, on the North shore of Lake Superior. She was the heroine of many an amusing story, and I shall never forget one ludicrous experience, in which I came off second-best. Word had come that our Bishop was to visit the parish. The little Church was scoured and decorated for the episcopal visit, and it became my duty to varnish the stove pipe that stretched the whole length of the building, while Mrs. Murphy scrubbed the floor. Two iron girders went across

from wall to wall just below the stove pipe and I had a long ladder resting on them, from which to reach my work. I sat on the ladder to do my task. Every time I changed my position I had to balance my brush carefully on the side of the ladder. Just before I finished the work the ladder wobbled and the brush fell. Mrs. Murphy was right beneath. I called, "Look out!" She looked up, and the black varnish-laden brush hit her square in the mouth. The torrent of excited Erse that followed would have done justice to the Sinn Fein Parliament, but it ended with, "Ye dirty little English spalpeen, come down out of that and I will smash your —— head off." I stayed up there until she had finished her work for the day. About a week later I met her and apologized, and she laughed heartily over the mishap.

In after years I took charge of a parish where a beautiful Church had been built, largely owing to the personal efforts of a former rector whom we shall call the Rev. Arthur Oswald. The altar and reredos were of his own workmanship and were very beautifully carved. The centre of the reredos held a little wooden cross and on the side panels there appeared the Greek letters, A and O. Shortly after the Church was completed, however, Mr. Oswald left the parish. His successor was one of a very opposite type of Churchmanship, to whom the sign of

the Cross was an object of abhorrence. Within a few days of his arrival he had removed the offending ornament from the altar. The following Sunday morning a dear old Irish parishioner, a grenadier-like woman, was the first to arrive at Church. The new rector was busy in the chancel preparing for the service when the old lady walked up the centre aisle. At once she missed the cross and, having a very deep respect for her former clergyman, she was filled with anger and did not hesitate to voice her views. She said, "Ah, Mither ——, I see you are trying to desthroy all traces of our old rector, but you have not succeeded, for you have still left the initials of the maker, A. O.—Arthur Oswald."

It is with extreme diffidence that I begin to narrate the funny side of English character, because I have generally found that while a Frenchman and an Irishman revel in jokes at their own expense, and the Scotchman will receive them good-naturedly (while at the same time he may pity the poor joker for his lack of understanding), usually English dignity is extremely sensitive. It is not that he has no sense of humour, because perhaps the richest of all wit is to be found within the pages of the English "Punch." Yet it may be that, owing to the fact that the Englishman has been so caricatured and so often hated throughout the world, he somehow fears there may be intentional malice in any fun of which

he is the butt. Then again, the reserved Englishman hates being made ludicrous almost more than anything else. I remember calling down the wrath of a sturdy son of old Albion once by merely repeating two of Mr. J. W. Bengough's rich little stories. In one of them Mr. Bengough described a newly arrived Englishman on a Canadian farm, who was given the job to split some wood for the kitchen fire. Going out a little later, the farmer found his apprentice whacking away at the wood and at the same time standing in a washtub for fear he would chop his feet.

The other story was that of a similar farm pupil from England who was told by his employer early one day to go down to a near-by swamp and round up some lambs that had strayed. Morning wore away and John did not return; likewise the afternoon. Just before dark the farmer began to get anxious and was starting out to hunt for his missing assistant, when John appeared with his clothes bedraggled and torn, and showing every sign of being thoroughly played out. "Hello, John, where have you been all day?" "Rounding up the lambs, sir." "Did you get them all?" "Oh, yes, they are down in the barn now." In view of John's appearance, and wondering what the lambs might be like, the farmer went to the barn to investigate. Peering over the half door, he saw forty jack-rabbits!

I tell these stories to illustrate what is, in my mind, the chief reason that an Englishman dislikes such jokes at his expense. The real humour of the North American continent depends largely upon its spirit of exaggeration, which is totally unlike the character of English wit, and hence the Englishman neither understands nor likes it.

Much English humour is quite unconsciously so on the part of its author. Such was the remark made to me a few years ago by a big, stolid Naval reserve man who tried to describe to me the religion of an acquaintance of his. He said, without a vestige of a smile, "He is the strangest man I ever met. I don't think that he believes in God, man or devil, as I understand them, but he has some queer idea that when you die your soul comes back on earth in the form of some animal. When he told me that, I up and told him that he must be back on his second trip and got into a jackass." My Reservist friend had little sympathy with or understanding of the doctrine of Reincarnation.

[Speaking of the theory of Reincarnation, I remember a very funny view-point voiced by a delightful little French Roman Catholic woman. It was after the Titanic disaster, when many were curious about the possibility of the late Mr. W. T. Stead being able to prove in himself the oft-repeated contention that the souls of the departed might return to earth. At an afternoon tea the conversation

had turned to this absorbingly interesting subject and several had expressed their belief in such a possibility. When appealed to for an opinion, the clever little daughter of old France said, "I don't know anything about it. My religion forbids me to study such tings, but I do know how I should like to come back if the good Lord ever permit it. I should like to be my dear husband's second wife's first baby; I would give them an awful time when I was teething!"]

The two stories that follow are plain statements of fact without any exaggeration whatever. A young Englishwoman had just come to my Canadian parish from overseas. One day at a neighbor's house she was given some cake which she liked very much. She asked her hostess for the recipe for making it. After being told the proper ingredients, she was directed to bake the cake in a greased tin. Evidently thinking of what the English call "tinned goods," she carefully washed out an ordinary salmon can, greased the inside of it and baked her little cake therein. Unfortunately, owing to the jagged top of the can, she and her husband had to eat the cake out of the tin with a spoon.

A young English student succeeded me in my Muskoka Lakes mission. One night he got lost in the bush and did not succeed in finding his way out until about five o'clock the next afternoon. During

all that time he had no food except a box of sugar-coated pills. When he returned to civilization, he had sucked all the sugar off the pills, happily without swallowing the latter. Foolishly he told some summer visitors the story, and it got into the Toronto papers. He is known as "Old Pills" in that neighborhood to this day.

That young man had initiative at least, and that reminds me of another young Englishman who proved himself master of circumstances. This youthful clergyman, upon his arrival in Canada, had been put in charge of one of our roughest country missions. He had a horse and buggy and soon learned to do all the work connected therewith himself, but one day he had to drive across country to a considerable distance from his home. When he reached his destination he found he had left behind him some essential for the business upon which he was engaged, necessitating his going back home for it that night. The farmer, whose house he had reached, persuaded him to leave his own jaded horse and take a team back with him. The horses were harnessed for him and away he went. When he reached his own quarters, he was "up against" the problem of unharnessing those horses. By dint of undoing nearly every buckle he could find, he got his "gee-gees" undressed and comfortably tucked up in bed. When morning came, however, his problem was intensified.

He had never harnessed a team and the straps lay in a heap like a Chinese puzzle. But this Englishman had initiative. He went back into his house and got the "New Ontario Bible" (Eaton's Catalogue). Turning to the picture which illustrates double harness, he followed that diagram, strap by strap, until he got his horses clothed and in their right mind, and made his journey in triumph.

In these days of terrible unrest, ragged nerves and miserable misunderstandings, it is to be hoped that the many strong racial types that combine to make our Canadian people may bring into the common treasury of national character their own fun-breeding, gloom-dispelling joyousness, laughing with and at one another without malice or meanness. Where the hearty laugh is heard the clouds will not stay.

IV. THE PARSON'S JOYS.

There are many heart-warming gratifications in a Canadian clergyman's life. One of them may be generalized under the term "appreciation." A good illustration of the loving devotion that often exists in a parish towards a faithful spiritual father was an incident that occurred on the North shore of Lake Huron. The clergyman in question was one of the most faithful old servants of God whom I have ever known, and his congregations in that scattered mission field recognised him at his true worth and loved him accordingly. Towards the spring of the year, just before the ice broke up, he was on the Manitoulin Island and had made an appointment to take a service in the evening on the mainland some miles away. Early in the afternoon he started to walk across the ice, accompanied by a young boy. They had not gone far when a blinding snowstorm came up from the west. The priest, knowing that the boy's parents would be anxious about him, insisted upon the lad going back. Then he struggled on. Snow soon filled the sleigh ruts and by and by it began to get dark. The only way he could judge his direction was by the storm beating on his left cheek. Heavier and heavier became the trail, and

slower and slower was his progress. All night long he plodded forward, but, becoming exceedingly fatigued, he had to take frequent rests. As day broke, he saw the North shore ahead of him and the lights in the little Church. On the shore there stood a group of his little flock. They had spent the whole night in the Church praying for the safety of their well-loved missionary, knowing that he must be out there on the Lake because he had never failed them. As the light grew clearer, he looked back and saw that for over a mile he had been walking beside a wide crack in the ice. He believes to this day that, in answer to the prayers of his people, an angel of God had accompanied him and guarded him from the danger. Who shall deny it?

"Appreciation" shows itself particularly in country places in the generous hospitality granted to the spiritual leader. Rural Canadian hospitality is proverbial anyway, though it sometimes takes queer turns. Many a meal have I had in farm kitchens. In one such place the rafters overhead were studded with nails from which there suspended in the winter-time various garments slowly drying above the kitchen fire. One winter evening the farmer had hung his wet socks on a nail right above the table. Unfortunately, during the meal one of them fell and spoiled my soup!

A whole chapter might be written on beds that that been slept in, or slept out of, as the case may be.

How many peripatetic "sky-pilots" have tossed the bed-clothes about on some uninviting couch so as not to hurt the feelings of their well-meaning hostess, and then slept on the floor?

A Canadian Bishop had an exceedingly funny experience. He reached a little village by train long after midnight, and went to the local hotel to rest. The sleepy clerk told him that all rooms were engaged, but that he might have one, the occupant of which had gone to a dance and probably would not return till morning. Being very tired, the Bishop was soon asleep. About four o'clock, however, there came a terrific banging on the locked door. The rightful owner of the rooms had returned. To use a Canadian expression, he was "all lighted up." The Bishop heard him shout, "Come out of that; you are occupewing the wrong pie." His Lordship paid no attention to him and "occupewed" that "pie" till morning.

A former secretary of one of our Church organizations was travelling through Western Canada, and came in the small hours of the morning to a little Prairie town. He was the only passenger to leave the train, and he walked up the street to the first of the only two hotels the community boasted. All was dark when he knocked at the door. After some delay, however, a light appeared in the transom above. Evidently the proprietor was standing at the head of the stairway with a lamp in his hand.

Then Boniface called out, "What do you want?" Thinking it foolish to give his name and address at that moment, our friend merely answered, "I want to stay here all night." The landlord calmly replied, "Well, stay there all night," and went back to bed. Luckily, the tired traveller was able to get into the other hotel by giving more explicit information.

Were it not for the generous habit of "giving-in-kind" on the part of rural parishioners, many a country parson and his family would starve on the mere pittance they receive as stipend. In my early ministerial days I had to keep a horse as well as a wife, but the farmers gave me hay and oats enough to feed the horse, and potatoes enough to almost feed the wife. Shortly after I was married one good woman gave us a goose. My wife had never cooked such an animal, but for all that she succeeded in roasting it beautifully. When it came to carving, however, it was my turn to confess ignorance. The companion of my joys and sorrows held the bird down on the table with two forks, while with the carving knife and fork I managed to mutilate it. My one regret ever since is that I have no snapshot of that operation.

Speaking of parsons' wives, draws forth a deserved tribute. Perhaps to more than any other agency under heaven, the Canadian skypilot owes most to the mistress of his heart and home, often the safety valve for all the expressions of irritability, dis-

appointment and disgust that he must hide from his parishioners. And very often in many ways she is the better member of the partnership. When first married, the wife frequently accompanies her husband in his parish visiting. After the arrival of the first baby, however, the clergyman's journeys are more frequently taken alone. In my case, a farmer's wife, in expressing regret that my better half was not with me, said, "You know, sir, we fairly worship the ground she walks on. We like her a long way better than we like you."

Our dear solicitous wives, what care they take of us, and how anxious they are for our happiness and welfare! It is on record that one parson's wife, whose husband was about to officiate at a funeral in inclement weather, while he was suffering at the same time from a bad cold, said to him, "Now, John, I want you to promise me one thing, and that is, that when you get out to that cold, bleak cemetery, you will not stand with your bare head on the damp ground." John promised!

To take a cultivated, carefully nurtured girl from city surroundings and make her a slave in a poor country parsonage seems very unfair. Seldom do they complain, but the famous "Sarah Dempster" epitaph might well be inscribed upon the gravestone of many a country parson's wife:

"Here lies a poor woman who always was tired;
She lived in a house where help was not hired!
Her last words on earth were, 'Dear friends, I am
going
Where washing ain't done, nor sweeping nor sewing;
But everything there's exact to my wishes,
For where they don't eat there's no washing up
dishes.
I'll be where loud anthems for ever are ringing,
But having no voice I'll get clear of the singing.
Don't mourn for me now, don't mourn for me ever,
I am going to do nothing for ever and ever."

Perhaps to no other man come so many chances to help his fellows as to a clergyman. His house is at one and the same time an Information Bureau, a Relief Office and an Employment Agency. Many and many a time does he get "stung," but the feeling that he may have really helped one deserving case more than compensates for the many impostures. It is a real joy to cheer the many lonely people throughout our wide country.

About eleven o'clock one night some years ago, my door bell rang. A tired looking man about forty years of age asked if I were the rector. Wondering what he wanted at so late an hour, I invited him into my study, and asked him his business. He said,

"Nothing much, but may I tell you a story?" Upon my expressing willingness to listen, he said, "Fifteen years ago I was married in Montreal. I had a good job then and we were very happy. After five years we went to New York State. My wife's health was delicate, and things went from bad to worse until a year ago, when she died, leaving me with one little girl. Shortly after my wife's death I was taken down with typhoid fever. When I got better I had no work, and I was forced to leave my little daughter and come away out here over a thousand miles to seek work, leaving the girl in the care of an orphanage. To-night is the fifteenth anniversary of my marriage, the first anniversary of my dear girl's death, and strangely enough, our baby's birthday as well. I could not sleep and wanted someone to talk to. I knew nobody in town, but thought a clergyman would be sympathetic; so I came to you." We were together until long after midnight, and I trust he went away feeling somewhat comforted.

Again and again it falls to a clergyman's lot to bring about reconciliation between estranged lives, but the joy of so doing and the similar delight in comforting the sick and the bereaved is too sacred to be illustrated by specific experiences in these pages. I merely mention these chances to help as being perhaps the highest sense of gratification that a clergyman ever finds in his work.

This reverent silence must be broken to record

one beautiful happening. On a cold, bright New Year's Day I was visiting in a general hospital, and in one of the private wards there was a little boy of about seven years, suffering from an acute spinal trouble. He was lying in a deep torpor and apparently the end was very near. Beside the bed sat the mother and her sister, silent, dry-eyed, heart-broken. Human skill had done all that human skill could do, and they were waiting for the passing of the young spirit of life. Entering the room I was overwhelmed with a sense of my own helplessness, when the thought came, "The prayer of faith shall save the sick." I knelt at the foot of the bed, and prayed humbly and brokenly. Then I left the room. Across the hall I met the doctor who was attending the boy.

"I have just seen little Jim, Doctor."

"Poor little chap, I am afraid he is all in," was his answer.

"I think you are wrong."

"Why, what makes you say that? He cannot possibly live an hour."

"I really do not know why I say it, but I have a strange feeling that the boy is going to recover."

"Well, I hope you are right, but all the evidence is against you."

The sequel may be briefly told. Within an hour a very decided change for the better showed itself, and in a few days the boy was home again, rapidly regaining health and vigour. Some time later I told the story to my own medical adviser, a quiet Scotchman who never "talked religion," and asked him if he thought the boy's recovery was a direct answer to prayer. He gave me the finest confession of faith I have ever heard from human lips.

"Of course it was an answer to your prayer. I love to think" (this was said with a strangely tender shyness than I cannot transcribe) "that whatever power or ability I may possess as a medical man has been given me in trust by a greater Physician, to be used by me as His instrument, and that when I have got to the end of my tether, He has not get to the end of His!"

V.

THE SHADY SIDE.

In the foregoing pages I have enumerated some of the "lights" in a clergyman's life, the grins, the smiles, the joys that are constantly coming his way. What shall I say about the "shades"? Happily, they are more than counterbalanced by the joys. "Keep your face turned full to the sunlight and the shadows will fall behind you." But, being human, the parson has his sorrows, personal and parochial.

Of the personal difficulties, financial troubles are easily the most obvious. Nearly every other human occupation in these days of the high cost of living enjoys an increasing income, but the country parson gets less pay than the lowliest manual labourer. The laity is slowly waking up to a sense of proper responsibility in this respect, but there are yet altogether too many who would sing lustily and sincerely, "I am glad salvation's free," and the pious old parishioner was not alone in his glory when he said, "Oh, I know the Gospel is free, for I have been a Christian for over forty years and it has not cost me a cent yet!" There is a vague idea in the minds of many good people that the clergy are paid out of some mythical fund, but it rarely dawns upon these

short-sighted folk that the aforesaid fund is in their own pockets.

Another personal trouble arises from the many difficulties of travelling in all seasons and in all weathers through the wild places of Canada. I have already spoken of the difficulty of snowshoeing, and I have told of one of my brethren who got lost in the bush. Such experiences are by no means uncommon and they might be meditated upon by those who are so easily dissuaded from going a few blocks to Church by reason of a passing shower.

Northern Ontario does not boast of many very good roads and driving over them is by no means a joke. Often I have made fifty miles in a day over stones and corduroy, and while the early winter driving through bush roads is a delight, that pleasure is lost when the wood-sleighs have got in their deadly work, and punched the roads full of pitch-holes. Driving at all rapidly in a short-gearred cutter entails some terrific bumps, when the front of the cutter hits the other side of the pitch-hole. One of my brother clergy told me that he was in the habit of "meeting himself" sixteen times in a journey of two miles through the bush, by which he meant that the base of his spine seemed about to meet his neck.

Of the parochial difficulties, one of the most galling is the suspicion that one sometimes meets, a suspicion usually bred by ignorance. Anything contrary to accepted custom is condemned by the awful

name of "ritual." May I illustrate? In my student days I was sent out from college to conduct a service in a town parish. One of the Churchwardens warned me beforehand that there were some in that congregation who would watch me very suspiciously, because their former parson had been "a terrible ritualist." The service went ordinarily enough until it came time for the sermon. The pulpit was a high, box-like affair with narrow steps leading into it. Just above these steps there was an oil lamp, and fearing to strike it with my head, I stooped slightly in ascending. This caused me to step on the skirt of my cassock and I took a wild "header" into the pulpit, barking my shins and considerably upsetting my piety. After the service the Churchwarden came into the vestry, laughing immoderately. He said, "You have effectually cooked your hash in this parish." "How so?" I asked. "Well, an old lady in the congregation came to me just now and said, 'I want you to write to the college authorities who sent that young man here and tell them never to send him again, for he is a ritualist of the worst kind. Did you see him actually bow to the pulpit?'"

What is "ritual" after all but the attempt to teach underlying doctrine by outward form and symbol? The ever-recurring seasons of the year, with the varying dress worn by the great "out-of-doors," are a part of the magnificent ritual by which a God of order teaches His animate creatures.

Hence it is not unnatural that there is instinctive in the human race a desire to "dress up" (though the human element often distorts the Divine ideal). The child loves to array himself in the garments of his elders, and then, however grotesque his appearance really may be, paints for himself an imaginary picture of his own importance. He is not far removed in instinct from his savage ancestor who gave himself a coat of blue paint and felt an access of courage and daredevilry come with the sticky covering.

The proud peacock spreading his gorgeous tail, the humbler barnyard rooster glancing sideways to see if the members of his harem are duly admiring his resplendent garb, the Red Indian in his war-paint and feathers, the soldier in his dress-uniform, the High Muck-a-Muck of the Ancient Order of Owls in his regalia, the priest in his ecclesiastical robes,—how obedient to a great natural law they all are! And the lower creature alone is satisfied with his natural adornment to create his impression!

A "ritualistic mind" is shown either by a love of "dressing-up," or by an equally extreme avoidance of it, and those who are most critical for or against any ritual are usually those who consider their own to be the only simon-pure, gilt-edged, ne plus ultra way of expressing the mind of the Creator.

Ritual, whether of place or person, form or ceremony, should surely be simple and significant, but

sometimes its significance can be easily and sadly misconstrued. Such a suspicion was caustically voiced by a visiting clergyman in a certain parish, upon accidentally overhearing a loud and cheerful discussion in Church between the rector and a lady-worker on the question of the flower-vases. The rector said they must on no account "interfere with or disturb the balance of the central almsdish!" The visitor afterwards composed the following parody of a well-known hymn:

Brightly gleams our Almsdish
Crowning the Altar pile,
Beckoning pilgrims onward
Up the central aisle.

Hail, thou dazzling emblem!
Sons of commerce see
All they think and pray for
Symbolized in thee.

Pure reformed religion,
Blest beyond St. Paul,
Glories in the Almsdish,
Counts it all in all.

Guard we thus our Gospel,
Thus its ensign wave:
"Full and free Subscription!
Works, not Faith, must save!"

Sign of our Salvation!
Orb of charity!
We and the Churchwardens
Fix our hopes on thee.

Whisper Church expenses
Into every heart,
Ere with booty laden
Thou in peace depart.

Perhaps the only really wrong ritual is that which too obviously seeks to exalt the ritualist himself, and not to express some helpful truth to the beholder. Far too often "dressing up" of place or individual signifies the vanity of the peacock and not the pictured truth of God. And the smaller the mind the greater the vanity.

There are some so-called colleges that deliberately cater to this human weakness. A man, perhaps for perfectly legitimate reasons that do not argue lack of personal ability, diligence or learning, may not have been able to secure a recognized college standing. Feeling, however, that he must make a show, he is tempted to "purchase unto himself a good degree" from some one-horse correspondence school, and succeeds in making himself ridiculous.

One such personal "ritualist" whom I remember had added to his possessions, upon the payment of a small sum, certain mystic letters after his name, a "diploma" couched in most wonderful "Latinity,"

and a marvellous hood that looked like a lineal descendant of Joseph's coat of many colors, the most dominant and eye-compelling of which was a broad band of orange. At a certain Deanery meeting, when a group of clergy were crowded into a little country vestry, robing for a service, this startling bit of circus-band uniform suddenly appeared on the back of the proud owner. An old Irish priest spotted it, and blandly asked, "Ah-h, Smith, was that confer-r-ed on ye by an Or-r-ange Lodge?" A most unclerical snort of indignation came from poor Joseph, and the gaudy garment was hastily returned to its bag, like its ancient type, never again to be seen by the public eye.

Perhaps the greatest parochial difficulty that any minister of the Gospel has to meet is the widespread spirit of indifference that seems like a perpetual wet blanket over his enthusiasm. On rare occasions the indifferent one admits his own apathy, as one man did when I asked him once to what parish he belonged. He said, "St. Andrew's is the Church that I neglect."

Too many forget that the parsons are not the only preachers,—every professing Christian by his life is preaching the Gospel daily,—preaching it to be the truth or to be a lie.

VI. THE VISION.

Those who know us least would sneeringly call the clerics, "The Third Sex," dividing humanity into "Men, women and parsons." Those who know us best recognize that the members of the Christian ministry are indeed "men of like passions" with themselves, subject to the same temptations, saddened by the same sorrows, and gladdened by the same joys.

By letting my readers peep behind scenes typical of many an ordinary Canadian parson's life, I have tried to justify the query that is implied in my title. The difference between cleric and lay is not one of character, but one of function. Man called out for a special and holy work indeed we are, but red-blooded men, nevertheless. And none is more cordially despised by the great body of parsons themselves than the very occasional cleric who, by his weak effeminacy, gives color to the "Third Sex" calumny.

The Bishop of London once described the all-round useful parson as one who was known to be absolutely straight in all his dealings, with no "side" or false dignity, with a keen sense of humour, but always conscious of the serious object of his life and

work, a "handy man" with ordinary manual tools, and a man of loving human sympathy and of deep faith. God knows few of us completely fulfil these requirements, but they form an ideal that is surely not "sexless".

In these kaleidoscopic pictures I have told you some of the many things that tickle the parson's "funny-bone". I have mentioned the deep joy that comes to him from the consciousness of doing something worth while. I have spoken of his worry in "making ends meet," and of braving the elements, winter and summer, in a Canadian mission field. Finally, I have referred to the danger of having his vision blurred, the vision of a high and holy vocation that seemed to stretch before him when he made his Ordination Vows.

Yet there is a vision, and, thank God, it becomes clearer and more definite as the years pass and the lines deepen. It is the glorious vision of the privilege of giving the life-throbbing of one's heart to the work of pressing forward the Kingdom of God:

"A child's kiss set on thy sighing lips shall make thee glad;

A poor man served by thee shall make thee rich;
A sick man helped by thee shall make thee strong;
Thou shalt be served thyself by every sense of service which thou renderest."

"May I reach that purest heaven, be to other souls the cup of strength in some great agony."

